



Andrea Meyer, Director of Government Relations
Testimony in support of HB 2869 -2 Amendments
House Committee on Early Childhood & Human Services
March 13, 2023

AARP is pleased to support HB 2869 with the -2 Amendments to establish a workgroup that will develop the framework for a Multi-Sector Plan for Aging for an Age-Friendly Oregon.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan social change organization with a nationwide membership of nearly 38 million and over 500,000 in Oregon. We work to improve quality of life for all as we age, strengthen our communities, and fight for the issues that matter to Oregon families. An important aspect of our work in Oregon is advocating for livable communities and an age-friendly state so that all Oregonians have the opportunity to live and age well in their communities.

But the reality is Oregon is one of the fastest aging states in the West. While Census projects that 1 in 5 Oregonians will be 65 years or older by 2030, the reality is that in 25 out of 36 Oregon counties, residents over 65 years of age account for over 25% of the population. The average 10-year-old America child today has a 50% change of living to be 100 years old. In addition, we are becoming more diverse.

At the same time another truth about longevity is that older adults are a powerful driver for growth and positive economic impact for our communities. In 2018, the longevity economy, which is defined as the sum of all economic activity that is supported by the consumer spending of households headed by someone age 50 or older, contributed \$98 billion to the state total Gross Domestic Product in Oregon. That is expected to grow to over \$340 billion by 2050.

National research tells us that 80% of people plan to work past age 65. When every sector is having labor shortages, this is good news. Beyond their economic contributions, people 50+ are critical contributors to the health and wellbeing of families and communities. The 50+ Oregonians contributed \$1.3 billion in volunteering activities and as of this year 2023, Oregonians provided \$8.7 billion in unpaid caregiving.

Oregon is not sufficiently prepared to address the challenges of our changing demographics, including the financial strain on individuals and families, communities, institutions and state and local governments, especially with growing housing insecurity among older adults, chronic health conditions and shortages in the health and care workforce.

HB 2869 is the first step towards helping Oregon prepare for the future and become more age-friendly. The bill will establish a workgroup that will develop the framework for a Multi-Sector Plan for Aging for an Age-Friendly Oregon.

The aging of our communities means that every sector – from long term supports and services to health care, from housing and transportation to our cities and counties, from our education institutions to employers and businesses of all sizes – and everyone will engage with older adults in some capacity whether as friends, family, neighbors, colleagues, customers, students, constituents and clients. Through HB 2869 we have an opportunity to shape our shared future and help create the conditions where all Oregonians can age well in our state.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to make our state an age-friendly and livable place for people of all ages and abilities. On behalf of over half million AARP members ages 50+ statewide, we urge you to support HB 2869.